



THE HORNET

The Newsletter of the 100 Squadron Association

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Newsletter 104 February 2014

Dear Members

Thank you for all your generous comments about the previous edition. I would like to apologise for the late publication of edition number 104, but we were keen to report on the visit of the Squadron Commander and several other members of the Squadron together with 2 Hawks to Marly in France to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the crash of one of our Lancasters JB604 in the town (see pages 7 to 13 for full report).

Also in this edition are full details of this year's reunion at RAF Leeming on 13th/14th June together with a booking form. I hope a good number of you will be able to attend, and I look forward to seeing you all at what promises to be an excellent reunion and hopefully the Lancaster will be there as well this year!

Nina Crane
(Editor of The Hornet)

The Association Reunion 2014

The 2014 Reunion will be held at RAF Leeming on Friday/Saturday, 13th/14th June 2014. The Boss, Tony Cann, is very keen that we focus the event on the Squadron and RAF Leeming. After the initial "Meet and Greet" in the Officers' Mess, Lunch will be available as "Pay as You Dine", but the Mess clearly needs some idea of the extra numbers we will generate, so please indicate your intentions on the application form. After lunch, we will split those attending into two groups. One group will head for the Squadron to have a briefing on current operations and a chance to browse in the history room and spend time with some of the pilots. The other group will head for the RAF Leeming - Historic Training Facility, which has been put together over the past eighteen months. It tells the history of the station from its construction in 1939 and use as a bomber airfield initially by RAF squadrons and later by the RCAF squadrons of 6 Group. After WWII, the airfield was a night fighter base with Meteors and Javelins before 10 years as No. 3 Flying Training School with the Jet Provost until again becoming a fighter base with the Tornado F3 and the Hawk. A guided tour of the exhibits and video presentations will be arranged. The two groups would swap over mid-afternoon and gather again at the Squadron before departing for overnight accommodation. The Officers' Mess will have some rooms available; however, these must be booked using the application form rather than direct with the Mess Reception.

We will gather again in the Officers' Mess on Friday evening for a buffet dinner. **DON'T FORGET TO BRING A RAFFLE PRIZE!** Babcock Engineering has kindly agreed to sponsor the wine with dinner. On Saturday morning, we will hold the AGM in the Mess with tea and coffee for the ladies; however, the station goes onto centralised messing at the weekend, so anyone staying in the Mess will have to go over to the Junior Ranks Mess or the Jolly Bean cafe near the Spar Shop for breakfast. For similar reasons, there will be no lunch facilities available in the Mess after the church service on Saturday. So the plan is:

Friday, 13th June 2014

- 11.00 – 13.30 Meet and Greet and light lunch in the Officers' Mess
- 13.45 – Depart to the Squadron and the RAF Leeming History Centre
- 16.30 – Depart for overnight accommodation
- 19.00 – "Happy Hour" and Reunion Buffet Dinner

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Saturday, 14th June 2014

09.30 – AGM at the Officers’ Mess, RAF Leeming

11.00 – Service at St Bede’s, the Station Church

11.45 – Depart RAF Leeming

The Squadron are making a bid for the Lancaster to fly past on either Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

An application form is included in the Members area of the website. Please ensure you indicate how many people require lunch on Friday, the number for dinner with your cheque and, if you would like to apply for the chance of accommodation in the Officers’ Mess on Friday night.

Norman Bonnor

Visit of the Canadian Lancaster to UK

The BBMF has announced the planned arrival of a very special guest during August 2014 when the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum plan to fly their Avro Lancaster to the UK for a month long visit. The Canadian Lancaster will depart from Hamilton, Ontario on August 4th with plans to arrive in England on August 8th. The North Atlantic crossing will include en-route stops at Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada, Narsarsuaq, Greenland, and Keflavik, Iceland, prior to arriving in the UK.



Shortly after arriving, the Lancaster will undergo a scheduled maintenance inspection. The CWHM crews will then complete a short training program with the BBMF in preparation to participate in several air displays and fly pasts with the BBMF Lancaster and fighters starting on August 14th. These displays will celebrate the exceptionally close British/Canadian relationship and commemorate the sacrifice and dedication of Commonwealth Bomber crews and the professionalism of both nations' air forces today.

CWHM President and CEO, Sqn Ldr (Ret.) David G. Rohrer C.D. who is a current Lancaster pilot, stated that this trans-atlantic crossing and visit to the BBMF and England is a "Once in a Lanc Time" event as it will not happen again. Rohrer indicated that this year, "a rare window of opportunity was identified to bring the last two flying Lancasters in the world together as a special salute to all the veterans of Bomber Command, many of whom are in their late 80s or older now." OC BBMF, Sqn Ldr Dunc Mason, said "To see these two aircraft flying at events together will be a unique sight and also the opportunity to truly commemorate those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Lest We Forget."

Text abbreviated from BBMF website

The Tale of the Tip Tank Touchdown

For exactly two years between June 1977 and June 1979 I was 'A' flight commander on 100 Squadron during the second Canberra period of its existence.

Many of the aircrew were second tour pilots who had failed to make the transition into the left hand seat of the multi-engined aircraft on which they had started their career, or were navigators who would probably never be assessed higher than "average". Paradoxically, this did not affect the Squadron's performance since the demands being put on the aircrew were well within their capabilities, and those pilots who had been denied the opportunity of becoming a V-force captain had been given the chance to be a Canberra captain. They knew their limitations and kept well within them so that the safety record and the morale of the Squadron during my time was very good. There were two accidents; however, one was the engine failure during an air test which is mentioned in the website history, but the other one (which, strangely, is not mentioned) was caused by pilot error. The irony of the situation is that the pilot in question, most unusually, was not a passed over V-force

tyro but a former Lightning pilot whose declared ambition in life was “to fly and fight”.

At this juncture, it is necessary to explain to those who have never flown a Canberra that it has a potentially very dangerous characteristic (shared, I believe, with the Meteor) in the event of an engine failure. Yes, it can fly on one engine, but below a certain speed rudder authority is lost and, if the power on the live engine is maintained below that speed, the aircraft will yaw and roll uncontrollably. Another shortcoming of the Avon 100 (and 109) engine is that, below 4,500 RPM, the power must be fed in from the throttles slowly to prevent an engine stall.

Because of the engine stall risk, it is essential to keep at least 4,500 RPM on the gauges until certain that it is possible to land and that no more power will be needed either to reach the threshold or to overshoot. The watchword is to avoid at all costs getting low and slow.

On the Monday morning of this particular accident, the aircraft in question was returning from RAF Leuchars where the crew had spent the weekend after a sortie from our base at RAF Marham followed by a landing away on the preceding Friday. This type of sortie had been arranged to enable four members of the Squadron (who made up the crew and passengers in the aircraft) to attend a colleague’s wedding in Scotland on Saturday where they did duty as part of the Guard of Honour. For this purpose, they had persuaded a nervous supply officer at RAF Brampton to issue them with ceremonial swords.

All Canberras can be fitted with panniers in the bomb bay which makes a very convenient luggage hold when going on ranger flights or for any other purpose. The cockpit of the B2 has two ejection seats in the rear for the navigators, one in the front for the pilot and a folding metal Rumbold seat next to it for an occasional fourth occupant. All of the seats were occupied, and the panniers full on this flight.

On the final approach, the pilot committed the classic errors of first cutting the power then, realising that his glide approach was going to land short, of opening the throttles too fast. The starboard engine power came up but the port engine stalled. The aircraft yawed and rolled to port and crossed the threshold at exactly ninety degrees from the horizontal so that the first part of the aircraft to touch the runway was the port tip tank.

At this point, there were two possibilities: one was to continue to roll and land upside down; the other was to pancake onto its belly. In the

seconds preceding and following the contact with the runway, a series of miracles occurred.

The navigator in the left hand rear seat of the B2 has a window to his left. Looking through it the nav became aware that he was looking directly down at the ground, contemplated ejection and, by the first miracle, decided that it was a bad idea; he would almost certainly have been killed.

The second miracle was that the roll did not continue to the inverted. But the impact with the runway when the aircraft landed on its belly was so great that the undercarriage collapsed and the nose section of the aircraft was snapped off at the bulkhead to which the pilot's ejection seat is attached.

The third miracle was that this caused the pilot's ejection seat to fire, but by now there was nothing for the cartridge to react against and the ejection seat fell to the ground with the pilot still strapped in. This undoubtedly saved his life, although he suffered a severe injury to his thigh.

The fourth miracle concerned the occupant of the Rumbold seat who was thrown forward out of the aircraft at about 100 knots and sent tumbling down the runway. Astonishingly, he suffered no more than cuts and bruises although there was a psychological trauma which hit him later. I am happy to say that he was given psychiatric treatment at RAF Halton and completely recovered.

As if that were not enough good fortune, the two navigators in the rear were able to unstrap and step out of the wreck, completely unharmed, even if the flying boot of one of them was damaged, to his unreasonable annoyance – some people are never grateful!

The squadron boss, Peter Le Marquand, and I jumped into his Mini when the alarm sounded and rushed out to the runway. The first thing that I noticed was that there were pieces of metal littering the runway which clearly were not part of a Canberra. On closer inspection they turned out to be saucepans. A number of wedding presents had been stashed in the nose of the aircraft as the panniers were full.

Peter went over to the still supine pilot who hadn't lost his sense of humour and managed to say apologetically words to the effect of "Sorry, Boss, another bad landing". The Brampton supply officer, however, apparently did lose his sense of humour when he learned that

he could not have his ceremonial swords back until the aircraft had been lifted off its belly, and the bomb doors opened to reveal the contents of the panniers.

There was, however, a fifth miracle: the morning after the accident, some civilians appeared at the station armed with photographs of the entire event. They were aero-spotters who had been standing at the boundary fence by the threshold so as to watch aircraft coming and going and to photograph them. They provided photographic evidence of the aircraft turning onto its final approach and a picture of the aircraft at the moment of impact with the runway. A bright flash could be seen between the tip tank and the runway and the angle between the aircraft and the runway could be seen to be a perfect right angle. The Board of Inquiry could not have asked for any better evidence.

Diccon Masterman

Memories of 24th February 1944

It was about 9:20 pm on the evening of 24th February 1944 when the village inhabitants heard the early-warning sirens from the town nearby. Not unusual as they sounded whenever allied air-forces were approaching. However, the sirens started anew, this time over and over again with short gaps between each wail. This was the full air-raid siren indicating aircraft in the local airspace. The villagers quickly went outside and started to search the skies for signs of the approaching aircraft. They showed no sign of fear or worry, because the British aircraft hadn't yet bombed the two annexed regions of Alsace and Lorraine. Indeed these raids on the German homeland would surely hasten the very liberation of France!

They searched the sky, covered by heavy cloud but were able distinguish the humming sound, far off and as yet unclear, of aircraft engines getting closer and closer. The German searchlights scanned the sky and the anti-aircraft guns began firing. Seemingly unperturbed and flying at 20 or 25,000 feet the RAF Bombers continued wave after wave sweeping ever eastwards. Now and again when a break in the cloud covers permitted, the inhabitants were able to make out the dark silhouettes of the allied aircraft. Suddenly a

large red light illuminated the night sky to the west. It came from a burning plane losing altitude quickly and seemed to be heading straight for the village.

The onlookers hastily sort refuge indoors as a tremendous explosion violently rocked the entire village. Windows were shattered, roof tiles blown off, ceilings cracked, doors blown open. The burning plane had exploded near to the mill located on the banks of the Seille river. The explosion resulting from the burning fuel tanks located in the plane's wings; it set fire to and destroyed the mill building. Fortunately, the mill keeper Mr Pierre Hesse and his family emerged unscathed from the accident. The bombs from the plane, which fell on both sides of the river and the adjoining fields had not been armed and did not explode. The village certainly had a narrow escape that night and even today the locals shiver at the thought of that terrible night.

The fire services from Marly led by their commanding officer set about putting out fires at the church whilst the fire services from Frescaty tackled the fire at the mill. In the dark cold night and after firstly breaking through the ice the firemen used the water from the river Seille to fill their hosepipes to help extinguish the fires. The following day at daybreak the extent of the damage caused became clearer to see. All the windows in the mill area of the village had been blown out and gaping holes could be seen in the roofs of the houses. Immediately both the local authorities and the Germans started work to repair the worst of the damage but this took a number of weeks to complete. A bomb was found stuck in the ground of a garden, another had landed flat in a farmyard.

The bodies of five airmen were found lying near to the site of the crash. The two remaining airmen were more fortunate managing to parachute to safety before the plane exploded, landing in Augny where they were rapidly made prisoner, given up by the "Siedlers" (German settlers.) The bodies of the five airmen were gathered together on the embankment lining the path which ran from the mill down to the river Seille. They were hastily buried in the early hours of the 26th February 1944 with no blessing or military honours. Life in Marly returned to normal.

The Ceremony on 24th February 1946

It was two years later on the initiative of Mr Jean Thiriot, president and general secretary of the local section of the escapees and resistance movement for Moselle, that a commemorative ceremony was organised on the 24th February 1946 to honour the five heroic allied airmen killed in action. A wooden cross bearing the inscription "Here lie five heroic allies, who gave their lives for the liberation of our country, the 24th February 1944" was erected on the burial mound which was their final resting place.

In 1948, a British military commission following a joint initiative by Mr Robert Schuman the then MP for Moselle and Foreign Affairs Minister along with the Resistance Fighters Association, came to the cemetery to carry out the exhumation of the five airmen in order to fully identify them. At the conclusion of this operation, five granite headstones were erected above the tombs and a commemorative plaque indicating their resting place was fixed to the entrance of the cemetery.



The crew of Lancaster JB 604:

Pilot - Flying Officer Vernon Llewelyn Bowen Jones

Bomb Aimer - Flight Sergeant John Carter Grindrod

Wireless Operator - Sergeant Joseph Henry Sullivan

Rear Gunner - Sergeant Maurice Herbert Messenger

Mid-Upper Gunner - Sergeant Patrick Anthony Turner

All killed in action and buried in Marly Communal Cemetery

Navigator - Flying Officer R.T. Garlick survived
as a PoW in Sagan, Stalag Luft 3

Flight Engineer - Sergeant K.E.J. Head survived
as a PoW in Schepetowka Camp



To this day, the five airmen rest in peace in the old village cemetery in Marly. Their graves are kept flowered all year round and villagers ensure that they remain forever the soldiers who liberated our sweet Lorraine from the vice of the invader.

Marly 25th February 2014

On 25th February, Wing Commander Cann and five 100 Squadron members attended a memorial service to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the loss of JB 604. Two Hawks flew into the French Air Force Base at Nancy the day before, while a ground party drove across to France with the Squadron standard. The ceremony started in St Brice's church with a memorial service before forming a procession to the cemetery where wreaths were laid and a minute's silence was observed. The procession then departed to the town's war memorial, where more wreaths were laid and the National Anthems played. The Mayor of Marly, Thierry Hory, read the following address, which illustrates the very strong feelings that the inhabitants of Marly still hold for 100 Squadron and the crew members of JB 604.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

The crash of the Lancaster on the town mill of Marly is an integral part of our history. In 1994, the fiftieth anniversary of this historical event was celebrated in the presence of the remaining survivor of the Lancaster and the widow of one of the crew members. This year marks the seventieth anniversary of this historical event.

Each one of us is full of admiration for the courage and the sense of self-sacrifice that these brave airmen possessed. They never had a second thought about giving up their own lives in order to grant us our freedom. We can never be thankful enough to these heroes for what they have done for us. This commemorative ceremony is the very least we can do to pay tribute and to honour them. Our thoughts go out to these men, and through them to all those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to grant us our freedom. Let us also share a thought for all those war-torn families and civilians who also suffered. Through this commemorative ceremony we are able to show our gratitude to them all.

To the younger generation we must pass on and instill the need to remember and commemorate, just as we must continue to combat intolerance and violence which remains too present in the world today. It is our duty as citizens, and as humans to never forget the atrocities of war, and to condemn them so that we never have to face them again.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the War Veterans association as well as the local Heritage association. I would particularly like to pay my respect and extend my thanks to Stéphane Cotel for his personal implication: as a municipal civil servant, he is also a passionate historian. He was even willing to meet head on the somewhat finer points of the English language in order to successfully complete the organisation of today's commemorative ceremony.

Finally I would like to thank our British friends who have made the journey here today. Their loyalty to our town is a token of the friendship between our two countries in a Europe that together we strive to develop and build.”

The day's events concluded with a reception for all guests and local dignitaries in the Town Hall.





No.1 Group Special Duties Flight 1944

Anyone with more than a passing knowledge of Bomber Command's operations in the winter of 1943/1944 will need no reminding of the grievous toll that the Battle of Berlin had taken on the squadrons of Bomber Command. The Battle opened on the night of 23rd/24th of August 1943 (100 Squadron suffered the very first loss that night) and was to go through to the end of March 1944. "Butch" Harris, the C-in-C, had famously said that he could "wreck Berlin from end to end – it will cost us between 400 and 500 bombers, and it will cost Germany the war". In the end, it cost Bomber Command over 700 aircraft, and Berlin was not reduced to rubble as Harris had predicted.

As that bloody winter turned towards the spring of 1944, the thoughts of the Commanders turned towards the summer and the planned invasion of Europe. Before any invasion could take place, important military and transport targets, both on the French coast and further Inland, would need to be targeted in order to lessen the threat to advancing Allied ground forces in the days and weeks after the

planned invasion. These targets, which included such places as railway junctions and yards, road junctions, Germany troop bases, Panzer depots, Luftwaffe airfields etc., totalled many hundreds, and it was clear that the Pathfinders of Bomber Command's 8 Group would struggle to mark each and every one for attacking Main Force aircraft. 5 Group had already been marking targets for nearly a year, predominantly with 617 Squadron under the leadership of Group Captain Cheshire, and it was decided at Bomber Command HQ to see if 1 Group could adopt a similar policy.

On the 4th of April 1944, Operational Instruction No.19 was issued by HQ 1 Group at Bawtry Hall, stating the intention to "train and operate suitable crews in 1 Group to act as Target Markers and Assembly Point Markers for precision attacks by small forces of exclusively 1 Group aircraft." The instruction went on to state that these operations would be carried out "chiefly during moonlight periods", usually periods of inactivity for Bomber Command's Main Force squadrons.

Exactly two weeks later, on the 18th April, the 1 Group Special Duties Flight, or "SDF" as it became universally known, was formed up at RAF Binbrook. The Commanding Officer of the SDF was Sqn Ldr Breakspear, an experienced Flight Commander from 100 Squadron. Going to Binbrook with him on the same day were five other crews – one each from 100 Squadron (Flt Lt Gillam and crew), 101 Squadron (Flt Lt Hull and crew), 103 Squadron (Flt Lt Russell-Fry and crew), 625 Squadron (Plt Off Marks and crew) and 626 Squadron (Plt Off Stewart and crew). Just under three weeks later a further two crews were posted to the SDF – Flt Sgt Daley and his crew from 460 Squadron and Plt Off Knowles with his crew from 625 Squadron. All of the crews commencing training on the Misson bombing range close to Group HQ at Bawtry on the 22nd of the month.

On the 30th April 1944, the SDF carried out their first operation, a German ammunition dump at Maintenon, close to the village of Chartres, south west of Paris. Under bright conditions with a full moon, the SDF carried out a very accurate marking of the target with yellow Target Indicators (TIs), and once marked, Sqn Ldr Breakspear circled the target giving bombing instructions to the 109 Main Force crews, who released their bombs from 8,000 feet. The accuracy of the marking and subsequent bombing of each of the three waves of the attack was such that several large explosions were felt, and the opinion of the returning crews was that the ammunition dump had been totally destroyed.

Post-raid photo reconnaissance proved this to be the case. Ken Talbot, flying as Flight Engineer in Flt Lt Gillam's crew, recorded it as a "wizard prang!!" in his logbook (Ken's obituary was published in Hornet 102 - ed.) The AOC 1 Group, AVM Sir Edgar Rice, sent a personal message to the crews of the SDF after this raid:

"My hearty congratulations on your magnificent work last night. The job was done with precision and complete efficiency. The loss of so much ammunition is a great disaster for the enemy, and will be of tremendous assistance to our invading forces when the time comes."

The SDF were in action again the following night, the 1st/2nd of May 1944, attacking the Merliet Motor Vehicle Works at Lyons. The six marker aircraft of the SDF were joined by 69 all-1 Group Main Force Lancasters, and Sqn Ldr Breakspear and his crews carried out marking of the target at 00:47 hours. One of the TIs was judged to be wide of the Aiming Point, but this was quickly corrected, and at 01:02 the first wave of Main Force were called in to "do their bit". Initial "creep-back" of the bombing by the bombers was quickly corrected by Sqn Ldr Breakspear, once again acting as Master Bomber and circling the target at just a few thousand feet. Prior to the second wave being called in at 01:07, Sqn Ldr Breakspear called in his SDF crews to re-mark the target, which had become obscured by smoke. Again, the raid was judged to be a success by all returning crews, one of whom put a quick burst into a marauding Ju88 whilst crossing the French coast homebound.

The next outing for the SDF was on the night of the 3rd/4th of May 1944, against a huge German military installation at Mailly-le-Camp. A number of individual targets within the main camp were to be attacked by a combined force of 1, 5, and 8 Groups. What happened on this raid has been subject to nearly 70 years of post-war speculation by historians such as myself, but one thing is absolutely certain – some "faffing around" by the 5 Group marker crews gave the Luftwaffe nightfighters time to get into the air and amongst the Main Force crews. It was the crews of 1 Group, in the final wave of the attack, who paid a very heavy price. On this bright, moonlit, cloudless night, Luftwaffe nightfighter crews from Nachtjagd 1, 4, 5, and 6 quickly picked up the Main Force bombers circling a fighter beacon just a few miles from the target, and began picking them off with impunity. Hauptmann Helmut Bergmann and his crew from

Nachtjadd 4 downed no less than SIX bombers in 30 minutes. In less than 90 minutes, no fewer than forty-five British bombers fell victim to the cannons of German nightfighters. Of these forty-five, twenty-nine were 1 Group aircraft, with 12 Squadron losing four, 101 Squadron losing four, 103 Squadron losing three, 166 Squadron another three, 550 Squadron losing one, 576 Squadron losing two, and 625 and 626 Squadrons losing three apiece. 460 Squadron, operating out of Binbrook, suffered the highest casualties of the night, losing no fewer than FIVE of their Lancasters, with just three of the thirty-five men involved surviving. Also lost on this night was Flt Lt Hull and his crew of the SDF, more of whom later.

The SDF, with four marker aircraft led initially by Flt Lt Hull, were specifically tasked with marking Target "B", a Panzer depot to the east of the main camp. The initial green spot flare laid was judged by Flt Lt Hull to have overshoot by 1,000 yards, with a second judged to have an error of 500 yards. The deputy Marker Leader laid a third marker which was judged to be accurate, and at eleven minutes past midnight 12 Main Force Lancasters (drawn mainly from 460 and 625 Squadrons) followed up the marking with accurate bombing, and the target was quickly obscured by smoke. Because of this, and also the fact that another Main Force raid by 5 Group had commenced close by, the remaining 1 Group aircraft detailed to bomb this target were diverted to assist in the 5 Group attack.

The SDF were rested briefly before their next attack on the night of the 6th/7th of May against an ammunition dump at Aubigne Racon. Four markers of the SDF were accompanied on this raid by 48 Main Force Lancasters, again all from 1 Group. Bright moonlight again prevailed, and the SDF had no trouble finding and marking the two aiming points within the target area. The bombing which followed was accurate, with several very large explosions being reported by returning crews.

By now, the SDF and 1 Group had settled down into their routine of finding, marking, and bombing their own targets as a self-contained force, without the assistance of the Pathfinders of 8 Group. It became the norm, rather than the exception, for 1 Group to operate independently from the rest of Bomber Command, and further raids on the 7th/8th of May (Rennes airfield and Bruz ammunition dump), the 9th/10th of May (German coastal gun batteries), and the 27th/28th of May (a German coastal gun battery at Merville) further honed the

skills and confidence of the SDF and the 1 Group Main Force squadrons who were bombing on their markers. Such was the demand for the services of the SDF that in early May their numbers had been swelled with the crews of Flt Sgt Daley (ex-460 Squadron) and Plt Off Knowles (ex-625 Squadron) joining them at Binbrook.

Although few people knew it for certain, D-Day was now fast approaching, and on the eve of the landings, the SDF were tasked with marking two German coastal gun batteries on the Cherbourg peninsula. Again the moon was bright, and with cloud tops at 5,000 feet the 215 Main Force crews from 12, 100, 101, 103, 166, 300, 460, 550, 576, 625 and 626 Squadrons (again representing an all-1 Group attack) bombed on sky markers dropped by the SDF. Crews reported the bombing to be concentrated on the markers at both targets, but because of the cloud the results were not able to be observed. Of interest is that as well as the 101 Squadron crews bombing the two gun batteries on this night, the "ABC" equipped Lancasters of the squadron were tasked with jamming German nightfighter transmissions to give the flotilla of boats now preparing to cross the English Channel a running chance of making the crossing without interference from the Luftwaffe. 101 Squadron achieved this aim with outstanding success.

Post D-Day, the operations of the SDF took on a broader role. As well as marking important transportation targets (such as those against the Luftwaffe airfield at Flers on the night of 9th/10th June, and the railway yards at Evreux two nights later) in order to cripple any German counter-attack against advancing Allied ground forces, they were also tasked with high-precision attacks on German troop concentrations that were holding up the Allied advance. One such attack took place at Caen in early August, where German troops were holding up the Allied advance under Montgomery to the south of the city. The SDF provided six aircraft to identify and mark several aiming points to the west of the Caen to Falaise road, the modern day N158, in a 700-yard diameter circle at Fontenay-le-Marmion. In what was now routine stuff for the SDF, the markers were placed accurately and on time, allowing the Main Force to place their bombs with great precision, and without danger to the Allied troops who were relatively close by towards Caen city centre. Such was the success of this raid, and the total destruction of German forces in the area, that in less than two weeks Allied troops were entering Paris, and within three

weeks the city had been liberated. This raid was the last time the SDF were used in the target marking role.

The final raid in which the SDF took part, in a purely bombing (as opposed to target marking) role was against the railway yards at Douai in a daylight raid on the 11th of August. The six aircraft of the SDF taking part joined 114 other Lancasters from 1 Group in a hugely successful attack from which all the 1 Group aircraft returned safely. This was mainly due to the complete command of the skies that the Allied forces now enjoyed in much of France, due in no small part to the efforts of the SDF and 1 Group squadrons who had spent the previous three months attacking airfields and other transportation targets in the country. Douai is a name which should also be familiar to anyone with an interest in 100 Squadron, who provided fifteen Lancasters towards the Group's total for this raid. Twenty seven years earlier, in their very first operation of World War One in April 1917, 100 had attacked Douai Aerodrome, home of Baron Von Richtofen's (the Red Baron) famous "Flying Circus", in what the Baron himself at the time called a "regular bit of impertinence". The night after 100 had attacked the railway yards at Douai, the first of five visits the squadron would make to Douai in World War One.

The SDF was disbanded in mid-August 1944, without pomp or ceremony, or indeed acknowledgment of the important part they had played in the build up to the Allied landings or the assistance they gave to the Allied advance post D-Day. SDF crews returned to their squadrons, where the following month they continued to play their part in the bombing campaign. In September 1944, Bomber Command turned its attention back to Germany for the final assault which, in less than 9 months would see the Allied victory, towards which Bomber Command had contributed so much for so little post-war recognition.

NOTES

Two crews were lost whilst serving with the SDF. On the night of the Maily raid, on the 3rd/4th May 1944, Flt Lt Hull and his crew went down in the target area. Flt Lt Hull was leading the bombing on the Panzer Depot and as such was circling the target area several thousand feet below the Main Force aircraft he was issuing instructions to over the radio. It is believed that his aircraft was hit by bombs from above – his last transmission was heard by all of the Main Force crews over the radio – "I am hit and going down". He then instructed his deputy Master

Bomber to take over and nothing further was heard. All of the crew were killed. They were on their second operation of their second tour.

The second SDF crew lost was that of Plt Off Knowles on the night of 30th June/1st July 1944, on his 15th op, when they were marking the railway yards at Vierzon. The reason for the loss is not known, but the German nightfighters put up a particularly fierce defence on the night so it is quite possible that a nightfighter was responsible, the likely candidate being Oberleutnant Jakob Schaus of Nachtjagd 4, claiming his 22nd victory.

No separate unit records exist for the SDF. In order to research and create the history of the SDF, I have had to refer to a number of official documents, including the operational record books of 100, 101, 103, 460, 625 and 626 Squadrons, the operational record books of RAF Binbrook, No.12 Base, and HQ No.1 Group, Bawtry Hall. Several years ago, I was lucky enough to meet Ken Talbot, the Flight Engineer in Flt Lt Gillam's crew. His logbook provided much needed additional information on the training and bombing techniques carried out by the SDF. In addition, I cannot write this article without placing on record my gratitude to Alain Charpentier, a researcher from Luray in France, who like myself has carried out extensive research into the formation and work of the SDF and has willingly shared it all with me. Merci beaucoup and amicalement Alain!!

The SDF CO, Sqn Ldr Breakspear, was a man to whom taking the war to the enemy was a point of principle and pride. One of 100's Flight Commanders ('A' Flight) before he left to command the SDF, in June of 1944 the London Gazette carried an announcement of the award of his DFC: -

"An excellent captain of aircraft and flight commander, Squadron Leader Breakspear has continually displayed a fine fighting spirit and an outstanding devotion to duty. On no fewer than eleven occasions this officer has taken part in attacks on Berlin, undeterred by the most intense enemy opposition. In November 1943, two engines of his aircraft were set on fire when over the German capital, and on another occasion half of a rudder was shot away. Each time by superb airmanship and captaincy, this officer has extricated his aircraft and crew from their perilous situations."

Readers wishing to learn more about the disastrous Mailly-le-Camp raid in early May of 1944 are encouraged to read "Battle Under The

Moon" by Jack Currie. A former 1 Group man himself (he flew a tour from Elsham Wolds with 103 Squadron) he has delved deep into the official records, as well as spoken to many of the veterans who were on the raid, to build up a comprehensive picture of what happened on the night. Originally published by Crecy, it is currently out of print but freely available second hand for only a few pounds.

If any readers have personal reminiscences, information about, or photographs of the SDF, I would be very pleased to hear from them!! I can be contacted by phone at home on 029 2031 6779, or by email: greg@greg-harrison.co.uk

Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial

The appeal to build a memorial to the Bomber Command aircrew listed in the Rolls of Honour kept in Lincoln Cathedral has recently received an anonymous donation of £750,000 taking the current total to over £1.4 million. The Chairman of the memorial trust, the Lord-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire - Tony Worth, said: "This generous contribution means that the memorial itself - The Spire of Names - is now fully funded, which is fantastic, particularly so soon after we launched the appeal in May last year. It now allows us time to secure funding for the interpretation centre and the memorial park from other funding sources, much of which is already in progress. We obviously have a way to go to reach our full target of £5m, but this is a huge step in the right direction." For the Lord-Lieutenant there is a very personal aspect to the appeal, his grandfather was one of the very first to join the RAF - his service number was 76. He served in Bomber Command and thankfully survived.

The memorial park is to be located on Canwick Hill to the south of Lincoln overlooking the Cathedral, which was often used as a beacon by pilots and navigators making their way home after bombing sorties. The centrepiece - The Spire of Names - will be a 50m (164 ft) steel spire bearing the names of the 25,611 airmen based in Lincolnshire who were killed while serving with Bomber Command. The spire has been designed by award-winning structural artist Walter Jack in conjunction with Atkins, one of the world's leading design firms. It will stand as a significant and contemporary memorial that will serve as not only a location for remembrance but also something that has international appeal for generations to come.

Plans for the memorial park include an Interpretation Centre in which the collective story of Bomber Command will be displayed paying tribute to those crew members who were lucky enough to survive, the ground crews whose essential work kept the aircraft flying, the aircraft and engine manufacturers and an understanding of the effect of the campaign on the civilian population in Germany and at home. There will be educational facilities including a dedicated school's worker to assist visiting school classes to learn about the Command's contribution to the war effort.



The park will also incorporate two peace gardens. One which will stand testament to each of the 27 Bomber Command bases in Lincolnshire during the war. This will feature soil taken from each of the stations in which a memorial tree will be planted with a stone marker bearing the station's name and insignia. Alongside this will be an International Peace Garden, with sculptures from each of the countries involved in Bomber Command: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Czechoslovakia, South Africa, France, United States of America, Jamaica and Rhodesia. 28% of the 55,573 airmen lost in Bomber Command were not British.

More information about the appeal can be found at:

www.lincsbombercommand-memorial.com

Squadron Liaison Officer

Jonny Mulhall has been re-assigned as Deputy Commander "A" Flight hence his rather short spell as our Liaison Officer. Tim Clement has taken over that role and has promised to send a picture and bio for the website and The Hornet. Tim joined "The Ton" from Coningsby flying the Typhoon.

100 Squadron Association - New Website

The 100 Squadron Association Website has become an integral part of making ourselves known to the world. It is not only a tool to tell the world about our Association, but it is also allows our members, wherever they may be around the world to keep abreast of the upcoming events with which the Association is involved.

Since our very first website, the field of Information Technology has changed dramatically, allowing us to turn our new website into an aesthetically pleasing item for the world over to see. Containing our history and information about our recent events, it allows the public to see how active we are as an Association, and inevitably will help to recruit new members for the future.

Therefore, I am pleased to announce that after much hard work, the brand new Association website is now live and ready to be seen by you and the world.

The new website uses a system which is much easier to update, making it easier for all members of the committee to make changes as and when is required, without needing a PhD in Physics to know how. There is also a brand new 'Members Area' containing the latest copies of 'The Hornet', news articles and details about upcoming Reunions. This ensures that all information which should only be made available to the members is kept private.

As you will see, the new website is a pretty one, but we do lack a few photographs from previous events or even from members' time on the Squadron. I am always on the hunt for photographs for the website and would like to ask you all to contact me should you wish for some of your own photos to be placed on the website.

If you have not already done so, you must re-register on the new website to access the member's area. If you have not done this yet and wish to do so, then please do contact me on the following email address: damien@lingosolutions.co.uk

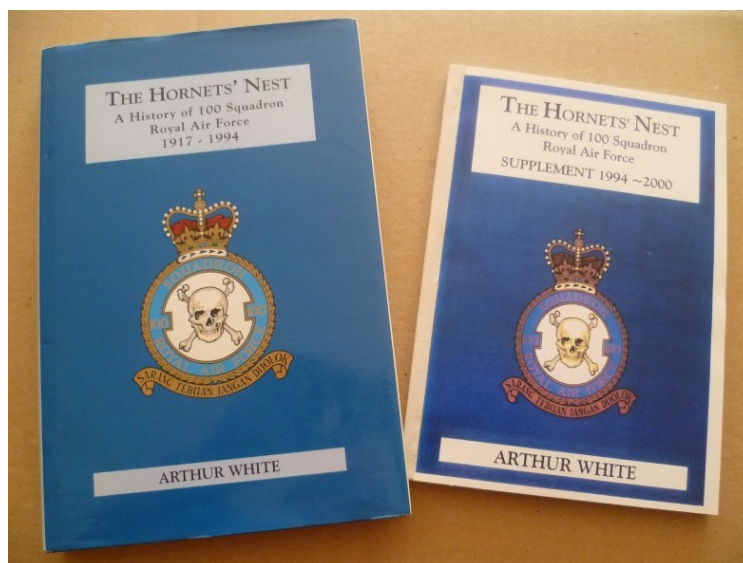
As ever, your feedback is very much welcome and I can always be contacted via email. If you have any questions about the new website, please feel free to send them over.

Damien English

Webmaster

How should we commemorate **"100 Squadron at 100"**

The committee has been looking at how we might commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the formation of 100 Squadron in 2017.



Greg Harrison has proposed that he could produce a new version of "The Hornet's Nest"; we have less than a handful of the original print run left. Clearly, while based on Arthur White's original work, it would also need to include items from the Supplement that he assembled from inputs received after the book was published; these were mainly prompted by people realising they should have contributed something earlier! Further material arose from the work on the DVD produced to commemorate the 90th Anniversary.

Greg's in-depth research of the National Archives, and many other sources, has uncovered much more official material which should be included. However, he is anxious that relevant personal stories, reminiscences, documents, texts and photographs may be lost to us as time passes.

**This is a unique opportunity for you to tell the story of
"My time on 100 Squadron."**

So please contact Greg at:

Greg Harrison, 24 Dinas Street, Grangetown, Cardiff, CF11 6QY

E-mail: greg@greg-harrison.co.uk

Phone: 029 2031 6779 or mobile: 07872 069462

ASSOCIATION MEMORABILIA

Squadron Association Ties, blue and maroon	£12.50
Blazer Badges (specify King's or Queen's crown)	£12.50
"The Hornets Nest" History of 100 Squadron	£12.50
Supplement to above	£4.50
"Aircraft of 100 Squadron" Montage	£5.50
DVD "100 at 90"	£5.00

Postage and Packaging is included in all of the above. Please make cheques payable to "100 Squadron Association".

100 SQUADRON MEMORABILIA

Cloth 100 Squadron crest badge	£5.00
Cloth skull and bones badge	£3.00
100 Squadron crest zap	£1.00
Skull and bones zap	£1.00
100 Squadron print (blank)	£5.00
95th Anniversary Squadron print (signed)	£10.00
100 Squadron shield (wooden)	£33.00
Framed embroidered crest	£33.00
Mini hip flask	£5.00
Skull and bones baseball cap	£7.00
100 Squadron T-shirt Skull or Hawk (state size)	£10.00
100 Squadron polo shirt (state size)	£14.00
(Sizes of T-shirts and Polo shirts are S, M, L, XL and XXL)	
100 Squadron cummerbund (blue-yellow check - other side Skull and Bones white on black) (state waist size)	£33.00
100 Squadron bow tie (blue-yellow check) S, M, L	£15.00
100 Squadron engraved tankard	Price on application

Please make cheques payable to "ISS Defence" and mark the back "100 Sqn 203135".

To order any of the above, please contact the Treasurer.